



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/45/150
21 February 1991

Forty-fifth session
Agenda item 110

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/45/766)]

45/150. Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections

The General Assembly,

Aware of its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1/ which provides that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, that everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his or her country, that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, and that this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures,

Noting that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2/ provides that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which

1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors, and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his or her country,

Condemning the system of apartheid and any other denial or abridgement of the right to vote on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Considering that the tricameral parliament established under the system of apartheid is a gross violation of the principle of universal and equal suffrage and has been overwhelmingly rejected by the international community,

Recalling that all States enjoy sovereign equality and that each State has the right freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems,

Recognizing that there is no single political system or electoral method that is equally suited to all nations and their people,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's observations concerning United Nations support for elections in Member States, as presented in his report on the work of the Organization, 3/

Recalling its resolutions 43/157 of 8 December 1988 and 44/146 of 15 December 1989, as well as Commission on Human Rights resolution 1989/51 of 7 March 1989, 4/

1. Underscores the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which establish that the authority to govern shall be based on the will of the people, as expressed in periodic and genuine elections;

2. Stresses, its conviction that periodic and genuine elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to protect the rights and interests of the governed and that, as a matter of practical experience, the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country is a crucial factor in the effective enjoyment by all of a wide range of other human rights and fundamental freedoms, embracing political, economic, social and cultural rights;

3. Declares that determining the will of the people requires an electoral process that provides an equal opportunity for all citizens to become candidates and put forward their political views, individually and in co-operation with others, as provided in national constitutions and laws;

3/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/45/1), sect. II.

4/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 2 (E/1989/20), chap. II, sect. A.

4. Recognizes that the efforts of the international community to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections should not call into question each State's sovereign right freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems, whether or not they conform to the preferences of other States;

5. Underscores the duty of each member of the international community to respect the decisions taken by other States in freely choosing and developing their electoral institutions;

6. Reaffirms that apartheid must be abolished, that the systematic denial or abridgement of the right to vote on the grounds of race or colour is a gross violation of human rights and an affront to the conscience and dignity of mankind, and that the right to participate in a political system based on common and equal citizenship and universal franchise is essential for the exercise of the principle of periodic and genuine elections;

7. Rejects the tricameral parliament established under the system of apartheid as an abhorrent expression of a fundamentally oppressive and flagrantly inhuman political system;

8. Affirms the value of the electoral assistance that the United Nations has provided at the request of Member States, in the context of full respect for their sovereignty;

9. Believes that the international community should continue to give serious consideration to ways in which the United Nations can respond to the requests of Member States as they seek to promote and strengthen their electoral institutions and procedures;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States, specialized agencies, other competent bodies of the United Nations system and those with specific expertise in this area concerning suitable approaches that will permit the Organization to respond to the requests of Member States for electoral assistance;

11. Also requests the Secretary-General to report his findings to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, together with an account of United Nations experience in election monitoring, within existing resources;

12. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections".

69th plenary meeting
18 December 1990